

Abstract of the Disclosure

The present invention relates to an optical communications system performance monitoring technique which provides for detecting bit disparity within a data stream. The average power value for a data stream is ascertained by passing the data stream through a low pass filter. The data stream's average power value is then compared with a bit stream baseline power value for a one bit stream and a zero bit stream, the resulting deviation comprising a bit disparity value. An embodiment of this invention would incorporate the use of threshold alarms set for unacceptably high levels of bit disparity. The triggering of these threshold alarms could initiate the transmission of automated customer warnings such as a notification that performance cannot be guaranteed due to high bit disparity on the signal.